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Review
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signed, competently executed though rather routinely and unimaginatively interpreted study of the perennial ethnic minority. Perhaps its most distinguishing features are its demographic and methodological sophistication. However, one grows somewhat weary of the overwrought claims to "scientific objectivity" based solely on sample size and the obvious quantifiability of demographic data. These claims become particularly irksome when the results are not substantially different from studies of "lesser" scientific qualities. Nevertheless, this does not detract from the work's usefulness either in minority-group courses or as a reference work for Jewish community workers, as well as interested laymen provided they can overcome its pervasively arid style. But perhaps the latter characteristic is only the price we pay for a sociology that is truly "professional."

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DAVID MECHANIC. *Medical Sociology: A Selective View.* Pp. viii, 504. New York: Free Press, 1968. No price.

Interest in health and illness among sociologists has been developed, in large part, during the last twenty years. Many research studies, focused on one or another aspect of health or illness, have been published, but there are few books that have attempted to formulate a behavioral science point of view of interrelations among health, illness, and society. In the volume under review, David Mechanic has made such an attempt.

Mechanic explores the interrelations of fifteen dimensions of the field. These are distribution and etiology of disease; cultural and social responses to illness; sociocultural aspects of medical care; mortality; social epidemiology; organization of medical practice; sociology of the healing occupations; sociology of the hospital; community health organization; social change and health care; medical education; public health; stress and disease; social and community psychiatry; and health policy and politics.

The fifteen dimensions of the field are developmentally examined in the three parts of the book. Part One presents a frame of reference for studying medical sociology. The five chapters in this part take the reader successively from the consideration of health and illness as facets of deviant behavior to the relevance of the concept of deviance to medical sociology, the doctor's perspective on disease and the patient, and the patient's perspective of the physician and his own illness. Finally, in chapter 5, the physician and the patient are brought together in the conference room.

The four chapters in Part Two are primarily methodological in their orientation. Different ways of studying the disease process—clinical investigation, controlled clinical trials, epidemiology, and demography—are discussed in terms simple enough that undergraduates can grasp the meaning of the materials. The examination of the literature on morbidity, mortality, and demography is straightforward and to the point. The complicated interplay between social stress and the clinical appearance of disease is particularly well developed.

Part Three is concerned with organizational factors in medical care. The development of medical care in the United States and Great Britain is the focus of chapter 10. This is an analysis of the ways in which historical factors have influenced the development of medical care organizations in the two countries. The final chapter is concerned with the ways in which organizational forces, particularly in the hospital, shape the environment of the patient as he is subjected to medical care.

Medical Sociology requires careful reading. In every chapter there are closely reasoned, insightful statements relevant to the question of interdependencies between health and disease. An important distinction, for example, is drawn between social causes of disease and social influences affecting the course of disease. The book has much to recommend it, but there are passages that are ideological and polemical. As Mechanic points out, his is a selective view, but a view that is, nevertheless, comprehensive and pertinent to the development of the field at this time.

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